AKIRA

29

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EPIC COMICS® $2.95 • $3.95 CAN • VOL. 1, NO. 29

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS
in collaboration with
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol. 1, No. 29
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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 29

RIDE TO REVENGE

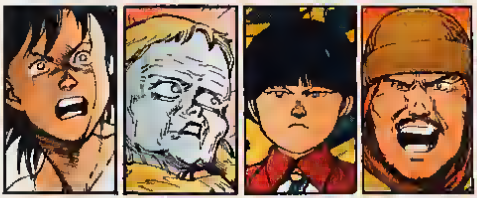
WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda**, once leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization—led by a man known only as the Colonel—and a resistance group whose members include **Kay**, **Ryu**, and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko**.

The **Colonel** has a number of psychic children under his control. Each is identified by a number marked on the hand. Among them are **Kiyoko** and **Masaru**—Numbers 25 and 27. The blind **Lady Miyako**—Number 19—was once among their ranks but now heads a great religious cult. Number 41 is **Tetsuo**, once Kaneda's friend but now his greatest enemy. **Tetsuo** lost an arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite SOL and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate for himself a prosthetic left arm.

Most powerful of all the children is Number 28—**Akira**—a docile and enigmatic boy who was placed in a cryogenic sleep almost forty years ago after he started the Third World War with a mental blast. He was recently reawakened by the jealous and ambitious **Tetsuo**. Shortly thereafter, he responded to emotional trauma by again devastating the reconstructed city of Neo-Tokyo. Japan now exists in a state of emergency. The forces of the army and the resistance are scattered and the military's formidable "caretaker robots" patrol the streets.

In the western part of Neo-Tokyo, the **Great**



Tetsuo | Kiyoko | Akira | The Colonel

Tokyo Empire is formed — a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units to defend their land. To increase the empire's power, **Tetsuo** uses drugs and training to develop psychic abilities in some of his subjects. Most faithful among their numerous followers is **Tetsuo**'s aide who is determined at all costs to destroy **Lady Miyako,** who offers sanctuary to any who come to her eastern shrine.

The Empire is infiltrated by teams of spies from the outside world, but all of them except **Lieutenant Yamada** —who takes temporary shelter with **Tyu**—are killed. Ryu wants to join **Yamada,** and **Tetsuo** meets the pair and reveals that **Yamada** has come to kill **Akira**. The spy decides to separate from **Ryu** and go his own way.

The **Colonel** is wounded and living in hiding with one of his scientists. He believes **Tetsuo** could become another **Akira,** and is determined to kill **Tetsuo** to atone for what he has brought about. However, military forces outside Neo-Tokyo are trying by computer to wrestle control of SOL from him. At the same time **Tetsuo,** acting upon advice from **Lady Miyako,** is trying to master his own weaknesses so that he can master **Akira**.

Meanwhile, **Lady Miyako, Masaru** and **Kiyoko** try to

Masaru **Kaori** **Kai** **Lt. Yamada**

convince **Kay** to join them in battle against **Tetsuo**. Although **Kay** lacks native psychic abilities, she is a powerful medium through whom the others can project their powers and strike as one. **Lady Miyako** explains that Akira's personality has been destroyed by his power, leaving him in a passive vessel, and that when Tetsuo's character is likewise eroded, he too will be beyond control. **Kay** considers Tetsuo's most recent action—destroying part of the moon and setting off geological cataclysms on earth merely to impress his and Akira's followers—and she agrees to be purified and join the others. Following his huge expenditure of power—which leaves many dead, and **Ryu** buried alive—Tetsuo begins to lose control, and his artificial arm assumes a grossly mutated form.

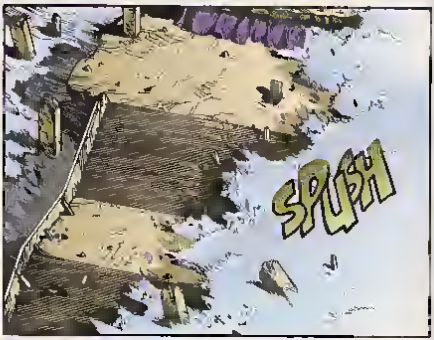
Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of scientists studying the **Akira** phenomenon—which they've codenamed **Juvenile A**—are aghast to learn that, despite their recommendations, the world's armies have amassed an **Akira Assassination Corps**, and are even more upset by the knowledge that the young and dedicated soldiers are sure to be slaughtered by the inconceivable might of their enemy. The Admiral commanding the ship scoffs when the scientists tell him that **Tetsuo** has teleported aboard to taunt his "fan club" refusing to be convinced even by the telekinetic havoc, death and injury the boy left in his wake.

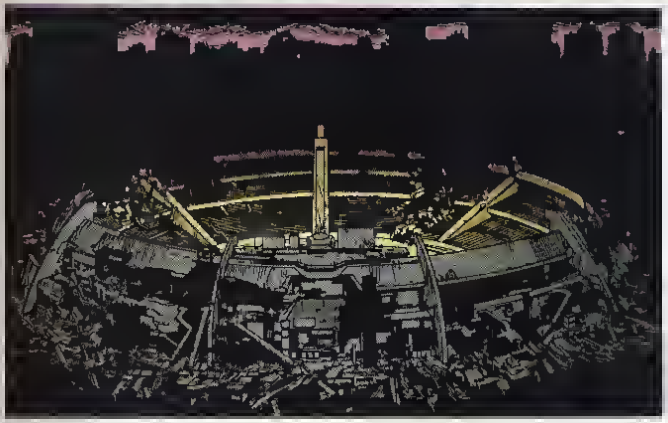
Kaneda, who's teamed up with **Kai** and **Joker**—a friend and rival from his gang days—is outraged to learn of the risk **Miyako** has talked **Kay** into taking. He vows to kill **Tetsuo** himself rather than let her face such danger. Then, at long last, he kisses **Kay** and promises her that they'll spend the night together when they next meet.

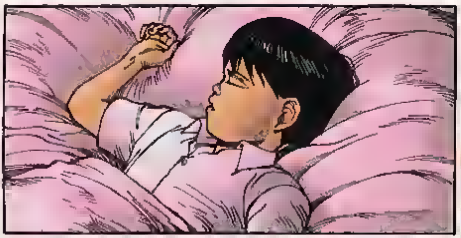
Kaneda **Chiyoko** **Kay** **Lady Miyako**

RRRUMBLE

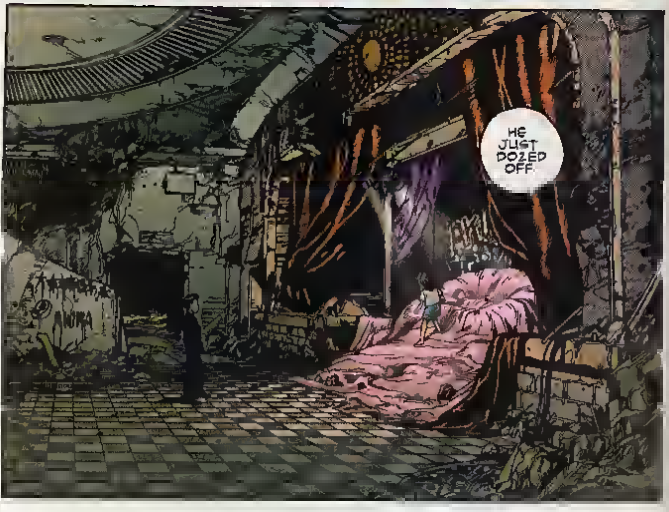
RRRRM


SPLSH





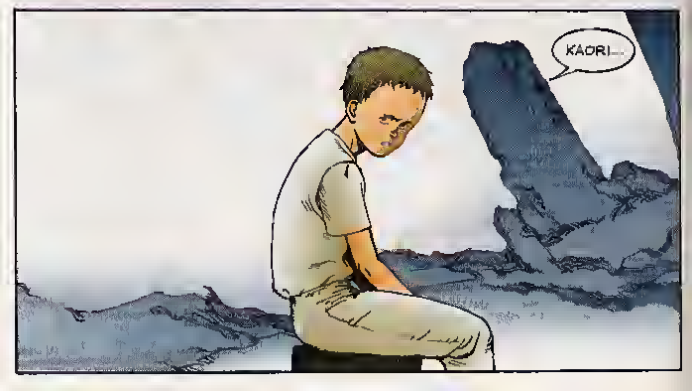
IS HE ASLEEP YET?

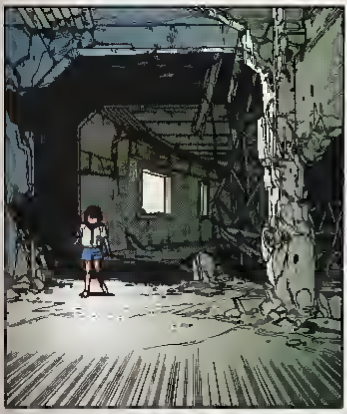

HE JUST DOZED OFF.

HOW IS MASTER TETSUO?
ONE OF OUR MEN HE DISEMBOWELED...
...BROKE THE ARMS OF TWO OTHERS...
...CRACKED A FEW LEGS, FRACTURED SOME RIBS...
"ALL THAT'S LEFT OF ONE GUY IS A SPLOTCH ON THE WALL.
NO ONE WANTS TO GO NEAR HIM, AND I CAN'T BLAME THEM.
I WISH I KNEW WHAT'S WRONG!
WHAT SENT HIM AROUND THE BEND?

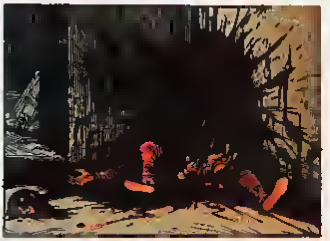
AS SOON AS THE STORM BREAKS...
...I'LL SUMMON OUR ARMY FOR ANOTHER PUNITIVE STRIKE AGAINST MIYAKO.
...MASTER TETSUO'S THE ONE WHO SHOULD LEAD US.
IF HE'S UP TO IT...

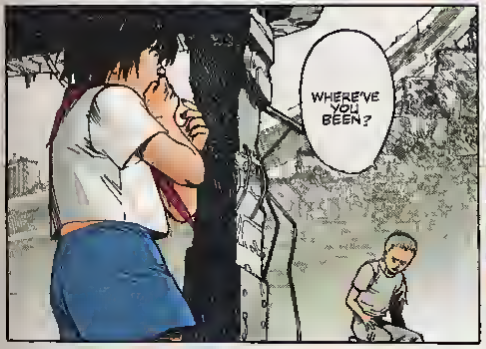
IS...IS MASTER TETSUO--?!
ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL.
WATCH YOURSELF. HE JUST STOPPED SCREAMING A MINUTE AGO.
IT'S UP TO YOU TO CALM HIM DOWN. NO ONE ELSE CAN DO IT

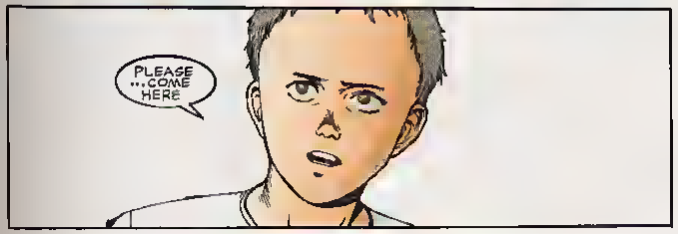

KAORI...



AAH!

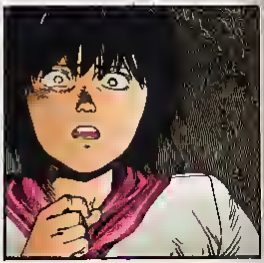



WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

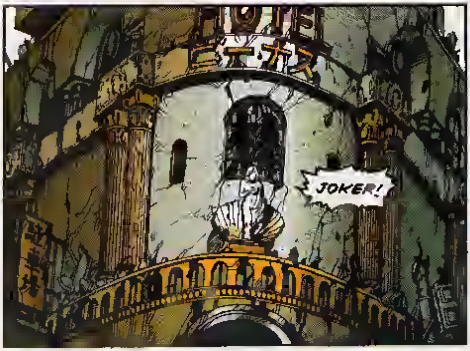

PLEASE ...COME HERE

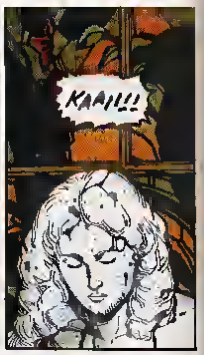
IT TOOK ME A WHILE, BUT I'M OKAY NOW

COME ON.



WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
KAORI--!
OH!

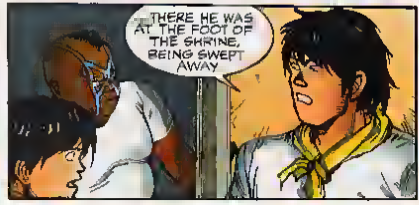

JOKER!


KAAI!!

SLAP SLAP
GLUSH
GLUSH

DROWNING? YOU'RE KIDDING!
NOPE I HEARD A VOICE CALLING FOR HELP AND WHEN I TOOK A LOOK...

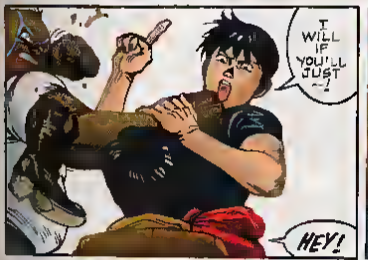
THIS IS NO TIME TO STAND AROUND YAKKING!

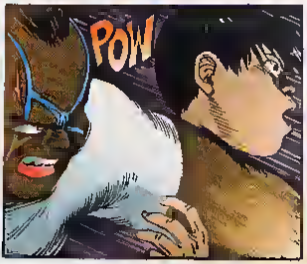

THERE HE WAS AT THE FOOT OF THE SHRINE, BEING SWEPT AWAY

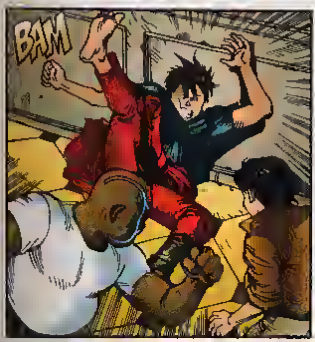
LISTEN!
I JUST GOT BACK FROM MIYAKO'S PLACE!
SAMATTER? YOU CAN'T SWIM? TOO BAD!
HUNH?
SO, WHY'D YOU HELP HIM?

HEY, STUPID!
PAY ATTENTION!

SO TELL US WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT.


I WILL IF YOU'LL JUST ~!
HEY!


POW


BAM

THUD

KANEDA?!
WHAT TH--?!

SAY WHAT?!
IS IT TRUE?
KAY PLANS TO...?!
SHE AN' MIYAKO ARE TOTALLY SERIOUS! I COULDN'T TALK 'EM OUT OF IT!
WHAT'LL WE DO, JOKER?
HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE?
NONE!
MIYAKO'S PLANNING TO STRIKE HARD AND FAST!
BUT...BUT, BUT KANEDA, WHAT'LL WE DO?!

THAT'S MY PROBLEM!
STOMP
I'LL DO THIS ALONE, IF I HAVE TO!
BUT... WE HAVE NO BATTLE PLANS... WE HAVEN'T EVEN RIGGED UP ANY WEAPONS.
THEN I'LL KILL HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, JOKER?
ALL RIGHT
BUT FIRST COME WITH ME A SECOND

OPEN THIS AND YOU'RE DEAD MEAT.
WHOA!
THIS IS GREAT!
WE GOT A WHOLE ARSENAL HERE!
SO? IT'S NOT LIKE ORDINARY WEAPONS HAVE DONE MUCH GOOD AGAINST TETSUO SO FAR.
BUT THIS
...IS A LITTLE SURPRISE I'VE BEEN SAVING
WHAT IS IT?

STATE OF THE ART TOP-SECRET WEAPON!
?
A LASER RIFLE!
HWNH?
HOW'D YOU KNOW THAT?
I'VE RUN INTO THESE BEFORE
LASERS! COOL! LIKE SOMETHING FROM A MOVIE! CAN I TOUCH IT?
THIS IS THE POWER SWITCH... HERE'S THE TARGETING SIGHT..
SHIT
MAYBE THIS'LL IMPRESS YOU!

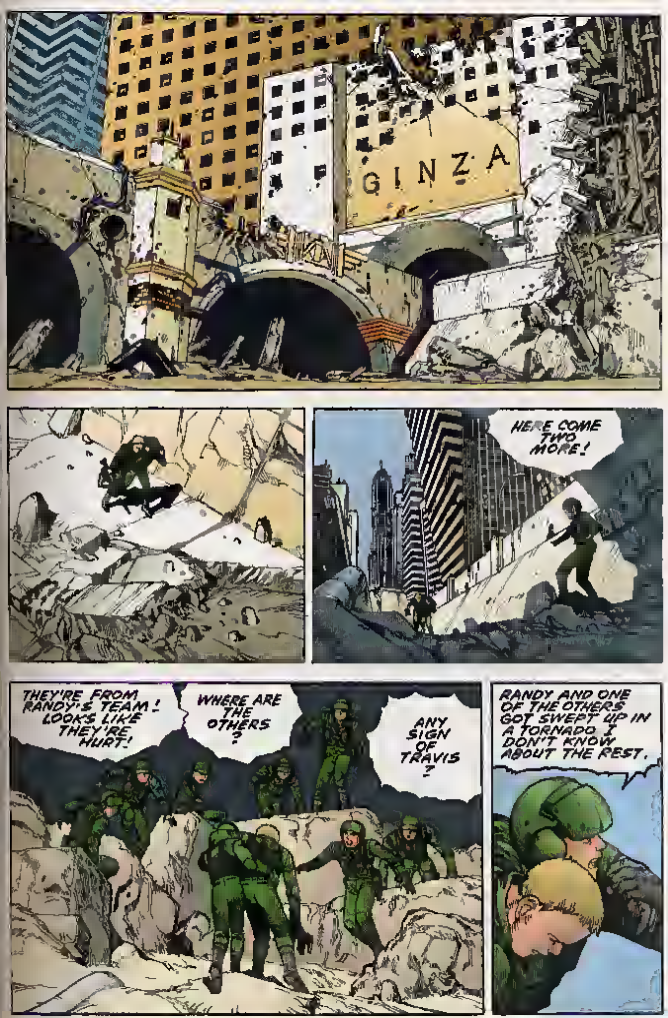
HEY! AREN'T THESE...?
THOSE JUNKERS WE FOUND DOWN IN THE SUBWAY

SHAPE THEY'RE IN, IT'D TAKE TWO WEEKS JUST TO GET THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS WORKING AGAIN

WISH I COULD USE ONE

CHECK THIS OUT, KANEDA

SWOOP
I PUT THIS TOGETHER FROM THE PARTS OF THE OTHERS
HAVEN'T TAKEN IT OUT FOR A TEST DRIVE YET I'M DOWN TO THE FINAL ENGINE CHECK
YOU TEST DRIVE IT
JOKER MADE IT LET HIM RIDE IT


GINZA
HERE COME TWO MORE!
THEY'RE FROM RANDY'S TEAM! LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HURT.
WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
ANY SIGN OF TRAVIS?
RANDY AND ONE OF THE OTHERS GOT SWEPT UP IN A TORNADO. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE REST.

WE'RE IN BAD SHAPE TO BEGIN THIS OPERATION!
HAS LIEUTENANT YAMADA MADE CONTACT YET?
NOT YET, AND WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WAIT FOR HIM. WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE OUT...
"...BUT THE WOUNDED STAY BEHIND!
MAKE US PROUD, GUYS!

ATTENTION! THERE IS A PARTY OF STRANGERS, HEAVILY ARMED...
?!
WHAT IS THAT?!
"...INVADING OUR LAND!
BE CAREFUL!
IT'S LIKE A VOICE IN MY HEAD!
LOOK!
?!
THEY ARE ENEMIES, COME TO HARM OUR GREAT LORD AKIRA!

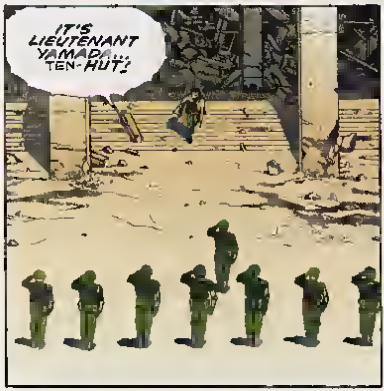
BEWARE! PREPARE YOURSELVES!
WE OF THE GREAT TOKYO EMPIRE MUST PREPARE.
HE'S OUT OF RANGE! USE A GUN!
BUDDA BUDDA
SOMETHING WRONG?
HE MUST HAVE THE POWER!
TRY A LITTLE HARDER, MASTER. TETSUO WILL BE SO DISAPPOINTED IF YOU QUIT TOO SOON.
EH?
WHO'S THAT?!

NOPE!
THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE UP THERE!
ANOTHER ENEMY?
RAUGH!

SPLAT

Kik

GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.

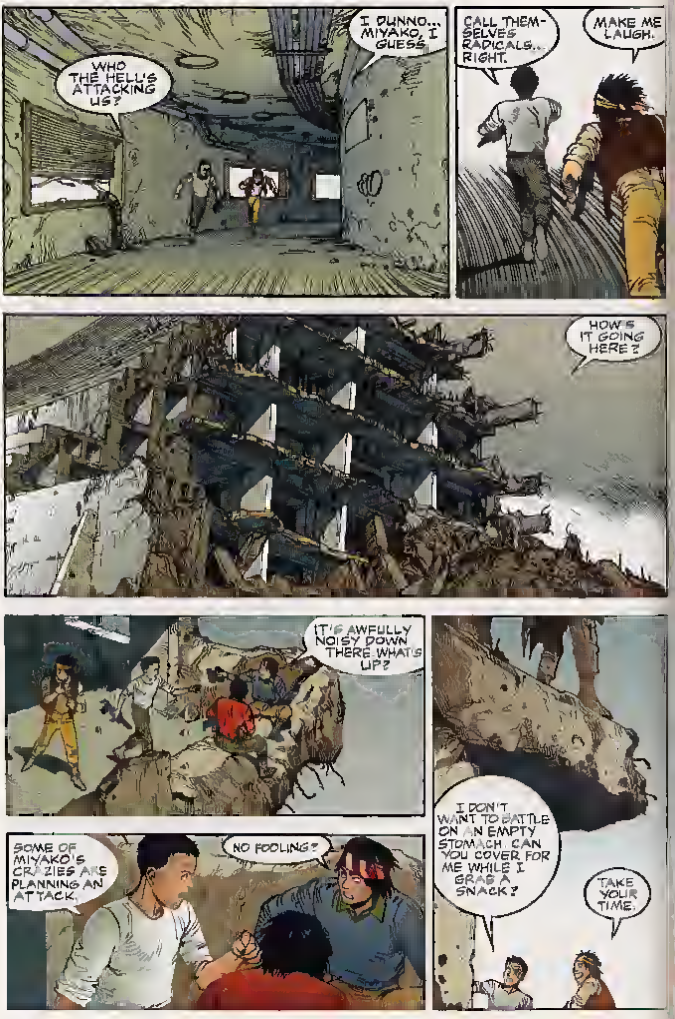

IT'S LIEUTENANT YAMADA... TEN-HUT!

THE BATTLEFIELD'S ALL AROUND US.

GUESS THE REST OF THE SCOUT TROOP FINALLY LANDED.
THEY'LL PROBABLY START LIGHTING CAMPFIRES ANY TIME NOW.
DISKPORT
BIG LINE

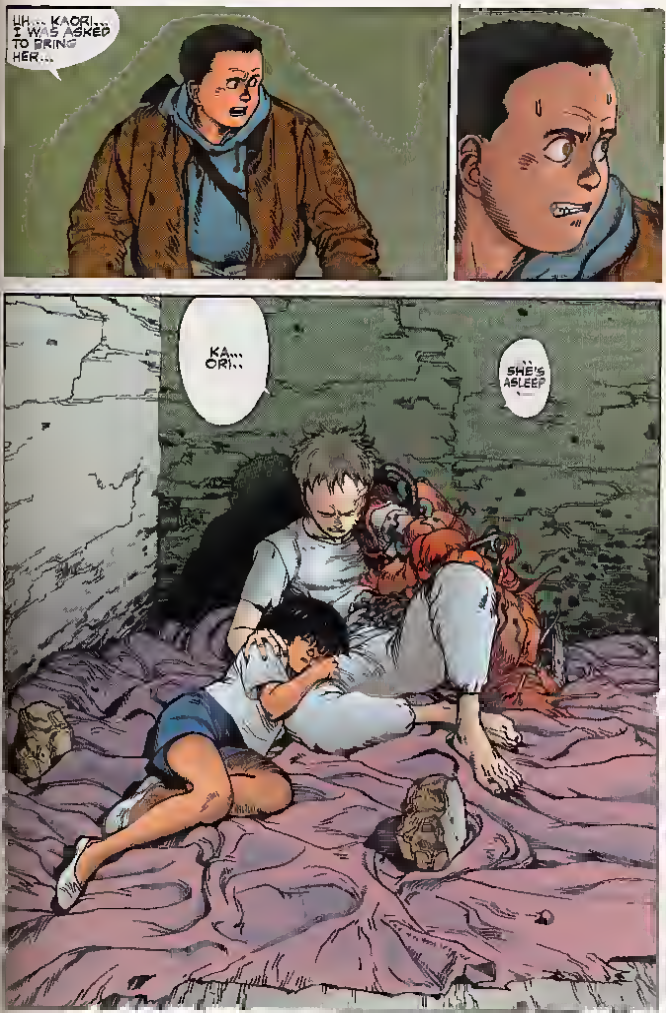
WHAT?!
THEY KNOCKED THE BIRDMAN OFF HIS PERCH?!
YOU'RE SURE?
NO DOUBT OF IT. HE FELL TO HIS DEATH.
RIGHT. I KEEP FORGETTING, YOU TWO SHARE A RAPPORT.
SHARED: IT ENDED WHEN HE HIT THE PAVEMENT.
WHO DID IT? WAS HE ABLE TO TELL YOU THAT?
YOU MEAN--
--AMERICANS?!
BLUE EYES. SOLDIERS WITH BLUE EYES. A LOT OF THEM CAME FROM THE SEA.

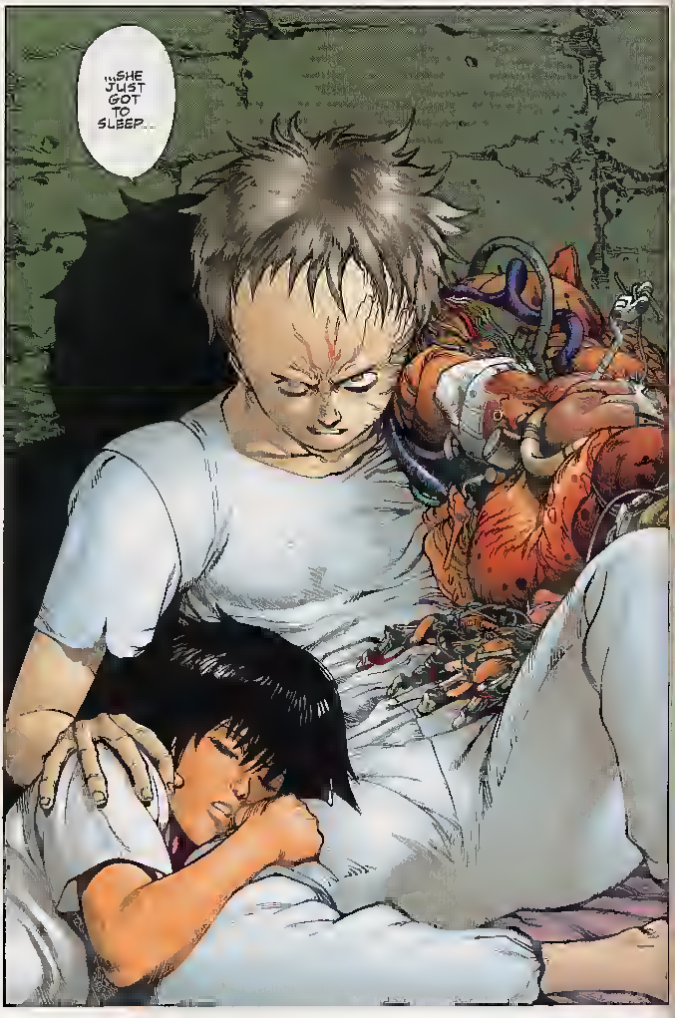
EMERGENCY!
SOUND THE ALARM!
BUDDA
BUDDA
HO-OHH!
tok tok tok
...WHIZZAT?
zuuuk
...EMERGENCY
...ALERT ?
PREPARE FOR AN ATTACK!
BATTLE STATIONS!


WHO THE HELL'S ATTACKING US?
I DUNNO... MIYAKO, I GUESS.
CALL THEMSELVES RADICALS... RIGHT.
MAKE ME LAUGH.
HOW'S IT GOING HERE?
IT'S AWFULLY NOISY DOWN THERE. WHAT'S UP?
SOME OF MIYAKO'S CRAZIES ARE PLANNING AN ATTACK.
NO FOOLING?
I DON'T WANT TO BATTLE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH. CAN YOU COVER FOR ME WHILE I GRAB A SNACK?
TAKE YOUR TIME.

SO, IS THIS GONNA BE A DECISIVE BATTLE?
BEATS ME.
THEY MUST BE PRETTY DESPERATE TO BE COMING HERE.
TETSUO... WHERE IS HE?
HUNH?

HE PICKED A LOUSY TIME TO...
OH!
HOW'S IT GOING?
SO FAR, SO GOOD.
GET KAORI.
YOU MEAN ME?! YOU WANT ME TO GO INTO THAT ROOM AND GET HER?!
JUST DO IT!
YOO-HOO! KAORI!
WHO IS IT?!
EEK!


UH... KAORI... I WAS ASKED TO BRING HER...
KA... ORI...
SHE'S ASLEEP


SHE JUST GOT TO SLEEP...

THE STADIUM?
YEAH. THEY MOVED IN THERE AFTER THEIR BIG CONVOCATION.
A LOT OF SOLDIERS FROM THEIR EMPIRE ARE RIGHT THERE WITH THEM.
HOW MANY?
THERE'VE BEEN A LOT OF DESERTIONS, BUT THERE STILL MUST BE AROUND FIFTY OR SIXTY LEFT.
THERE ARE STILL SOME PASSABLE ROADS BETWEEN HERE AND THERE, SO WE CAN USE BIKES TO GET THERE.
RIGHT.
LET'S GO!
KLAT

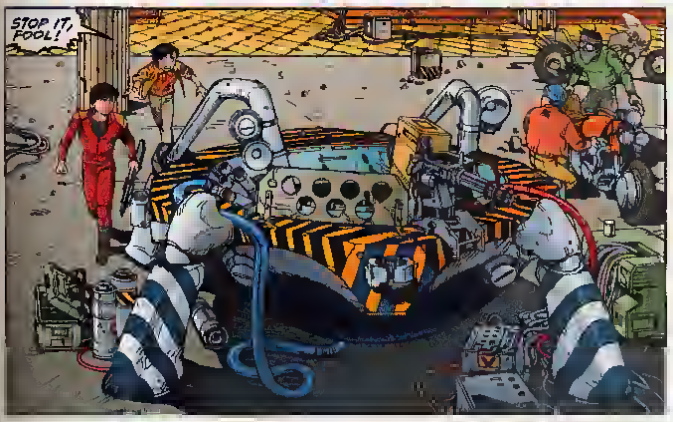
GO...?
I THOUGHT WE HAD TO HAVE A PLAN FIRST.
JOKER SAID HE'S WORKING ON ONE...
HEY, KANEDA!
PLAN...?
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF GOOD WILL A PLAN DO?!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR PLANS!
WHERE IS JOKER, ANYWAY
TRYING TO GET HIS NEW TOY WORKING.
HE WANTS TO RIDE IT WHEN HE LEADS US INTO BATTLE.
GOT TO ADMIT, IT'LL SURPRISE THE ENEMY.
YEAH! THEY'LL GET A GOOD LAUGH OUT OF IT!
THEY CAN PICK HIM OFF WITH A ROCK BEFORE HE FIRES ONE SHOT.
BUT, KANEDA ...!
COME ON KAI!

D'YOU REALLY WANT TO GO ALONE?
AFTER ALL EVERYONE'S BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER?!

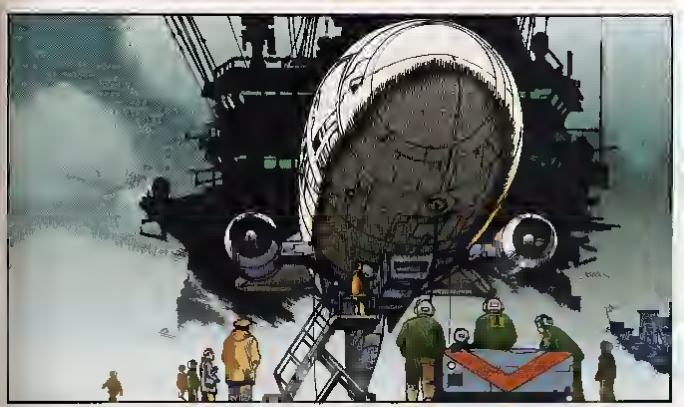
DON'T WORRY. I'LL STAY WITH THE GROUP.

REALLY?
THAT BIG, BRIGHT BODY MAKES A PERFECT DECOY!

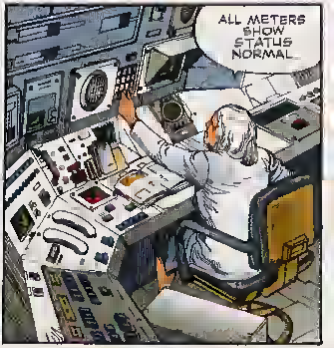
WHA--?
GET THE FLYING MECHANICAL RIG READY TO GO, AND MAKE SURE HE'S WELL DECO-RATED!

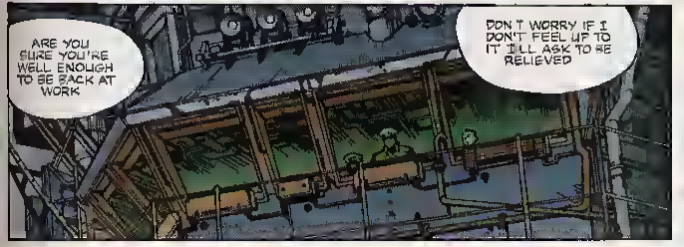

STOP IT, FOOL!

WHAT'S UP?
BEATS ME.
FULLY CHARGED UP!
MOVE IT PIGGY! I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY!
KANEDA KNOCK IT OFF!
WOW!
VRRRRRN
YEAH! THAT'S THE TICKET! LISTEN TO HER PURR!



WHAT KIND OF READINGS ARE YOU GETTING DR JORRIS?


ALL METERS SHOW STATUS NORMAL

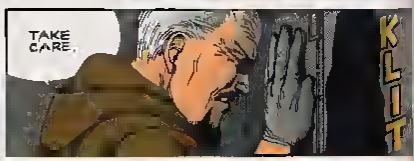

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE WELL ENOUGH TO BE BACK AT WORK
DON'T WORRY IF I DON'T FEEL UP TO IT I'LL ASK TO BE RELIEVED

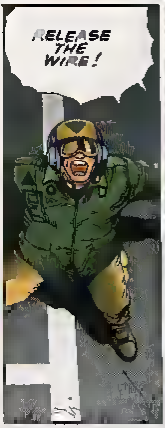
EVERYTIME I ASK YOU, IT'S "TWO MORE DAYS...THREE MORE DAYS..."
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, LIEUTENANT?
YOU ALREADY ASSURED ME YOU WERE ON THE VERGE OF CRACKING THE SECURITY CODE ON SOL.
I WAS, SIR. BUT WHOEVER CONTROLS THE SATELLITE IS ON TO US. THEY KEEP REPROGRAMMING THEIR COMPUTERS!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR EXCUSES!
I'VE SENT MY BOYS INTO THE JAWS OF DEATH.

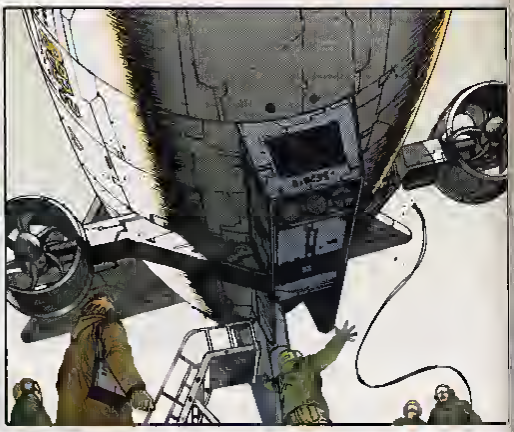
WATCH OUT! PART OF THAT WIRE IS COMING LOOSE!
YOU'VE GOTTA REMEMBER, THE WIND KEEPS PULLING AT IT!
KLAK
HOW ARE YOU DOING IN THERE, DR. SIMMONS?
A LITTLE CRAMPED BUT OTHERWISE, FINE.
I WISH I WEREN'T THE ONLY ONE GOING.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. THE ALTERNATIVE MAY BE THAT WE ALL SIMPLY VANISH.
SO PLEASE...

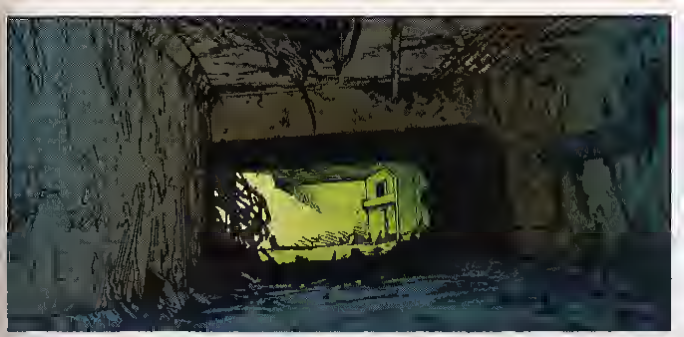
...TAKE NO FOOLISH CHANCES.

I UNDERSTAND, DR. BERNARDI. I'LL TRY TO COME BACK IN ONE PIECE.


TAKE CARE.
KLIT


RELEASE THE WIRE!

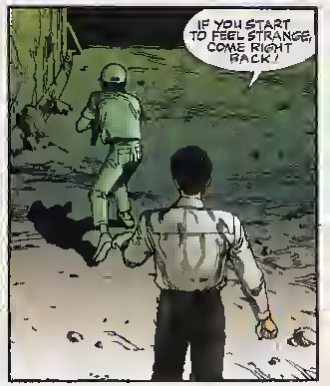




TAKE A LOOK.

OF...
...OF COURSE, SIR.

HUH?

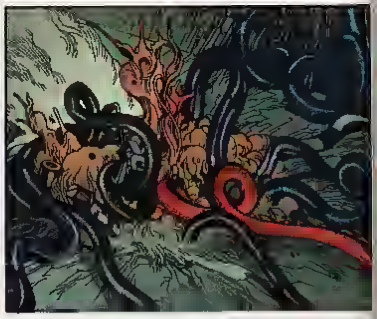

IF YOU START TO FEEL STRANGE, COME RIGHT BACK!

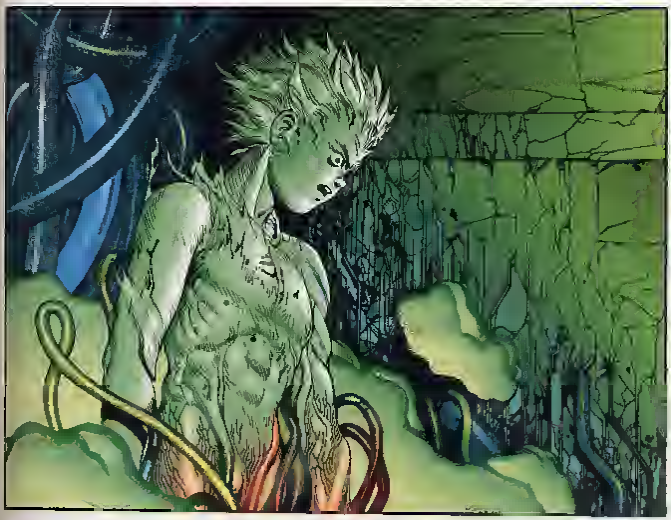
CRUNCH
UH-OH!
POP
GLOOT

KRUMBLE
YAAUGH!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

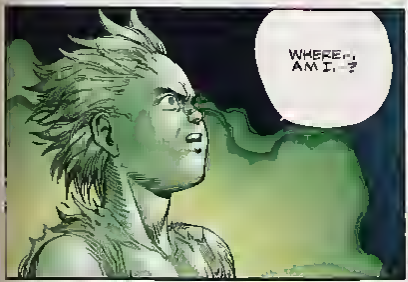
AAIEEE!
BOOM

NOW WHAT?
HMM?
POP
WHAT'S ALL THIS TUBING?!





TETSUO!

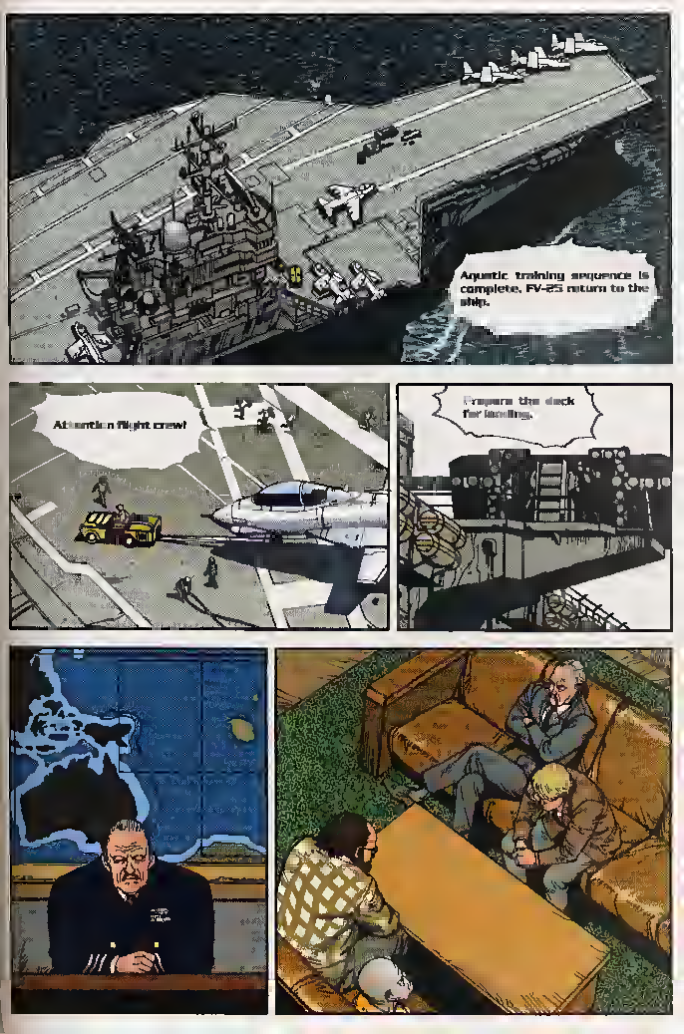

WHERE... AM I...?

?OOGH!?

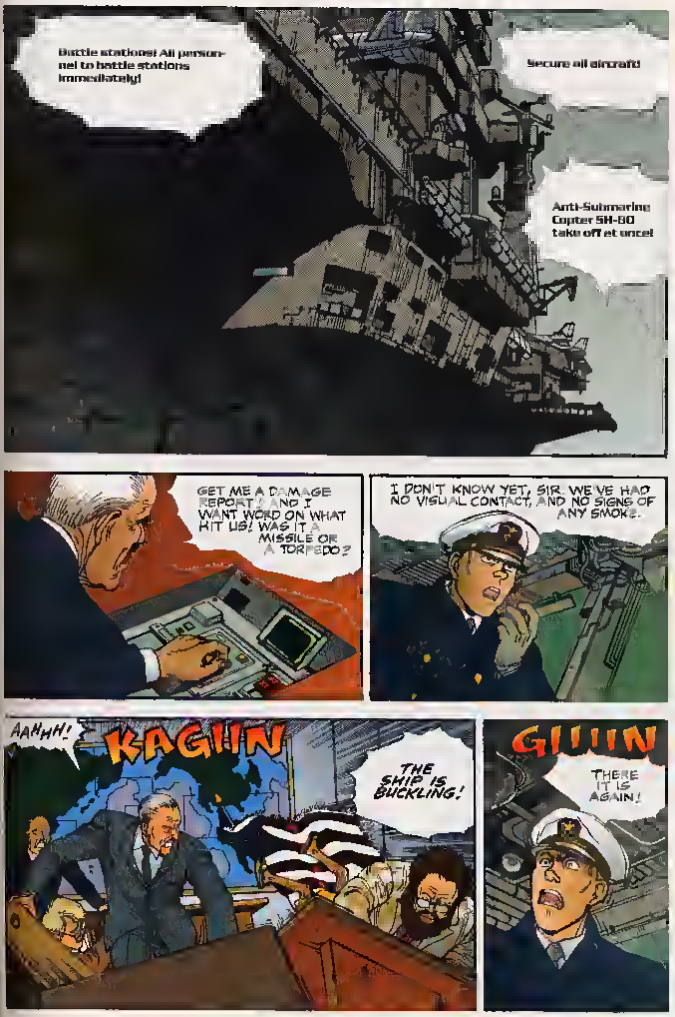
...OOO...
MY... MY BODY... IS...
WAIT!
THEY'LL KNOW...
VOOM
WAIT!
GASP!

RRUMBLE
DAMN...
...SO CLOSE...
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
WHAT THE HELL AM I GONNA DO?!

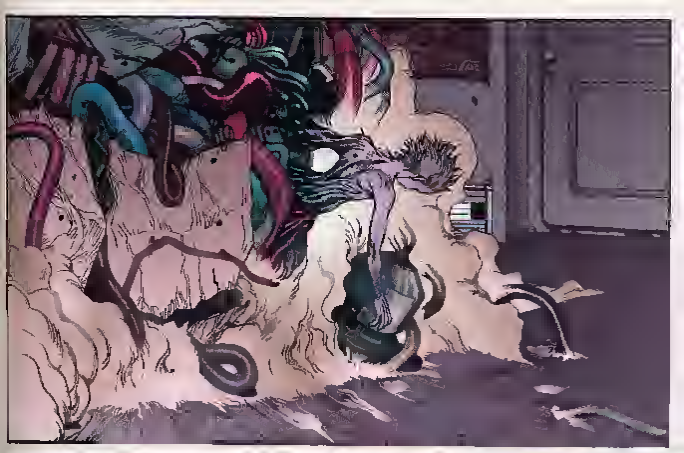
NOT AS BIG AS THE LAST ONE WAS.
WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE GET THERE.
COULD THEY BE FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES, SIR?


Aquatic training sequence is complete, FV-25 return to the ship.
Attention flight crew!
Prepare the deck for landing.

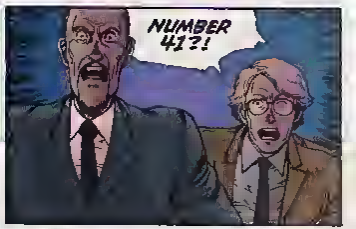
TALK TO ME, DR. BERNARD!
I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.
IF DR. SIMMONS IS CAUGHT IN A RESTRICTED AREA, HE COULD BE SHOT AS A SPY...
... AND AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT COULD RESULT, JEOPARDIZING THE FUTURE OF THIS AND OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS.
YOU MUST TELL ME WHERE HE WENT!
HMM?!
SSHHM
OHH!
SHOCKWAVES --?!

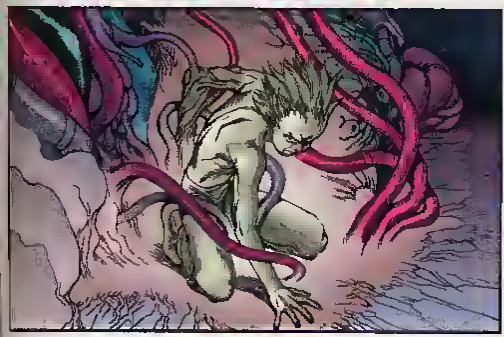

Battle stations! All personnel to battle stations immediately!
Secure all aircraft!
Anti-Submarine Copter SH-60 take off at once!
GET ME A DAMAGE REPORT! AND I WANT WORD ON WHAT HIT US! WAS IT A MISSILE OR A TORPEDO?
I DON'T KNOW YET, SIR. WE'VE HAD NO VISUAL CONTACT, AND NO SIGNS OF ANY SMOKE.
AAHHH!
KAGIIN
THE SHIP IS BUCKLING!
GIIIIN
THERE IT IS AGAIN!

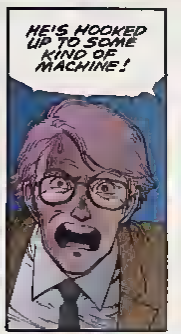
GIIIIN
HAS IT STOPPED?
IT'S HUNTING US!
EH?
GUNGONG
HE'S COMING!

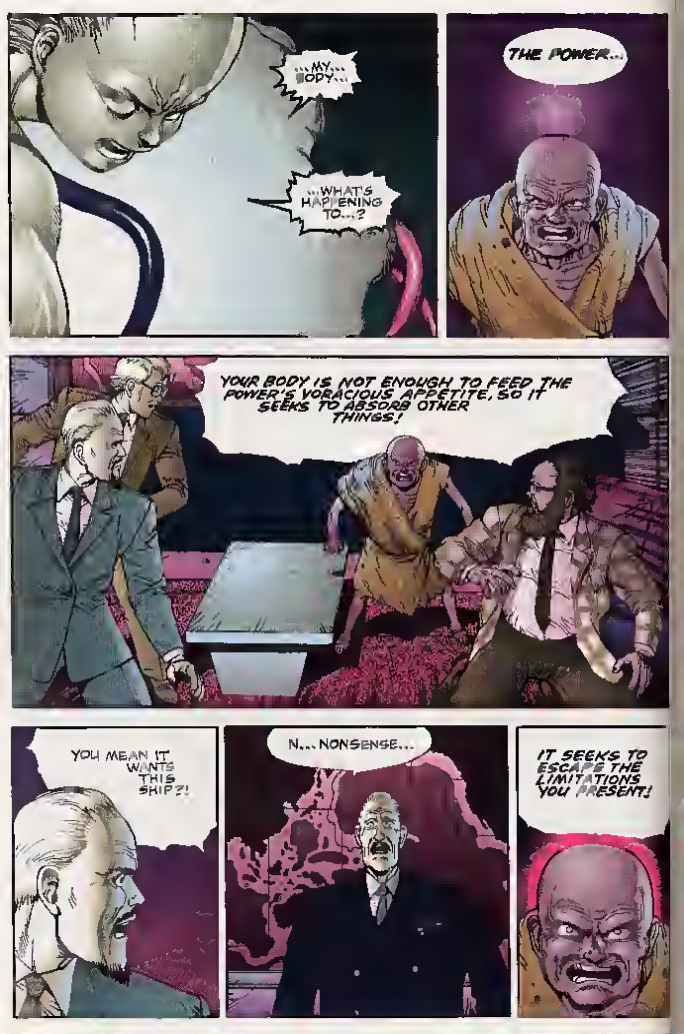


WH-WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS...?

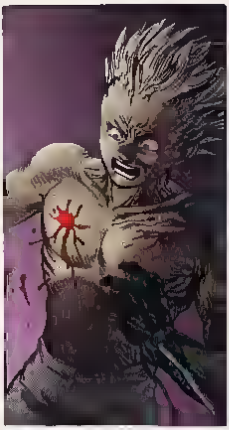

NUMBER 41?!

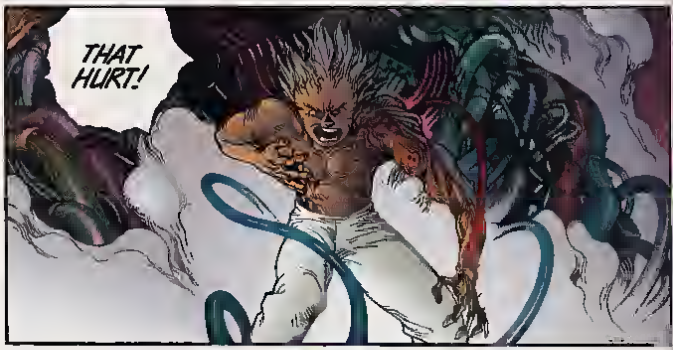


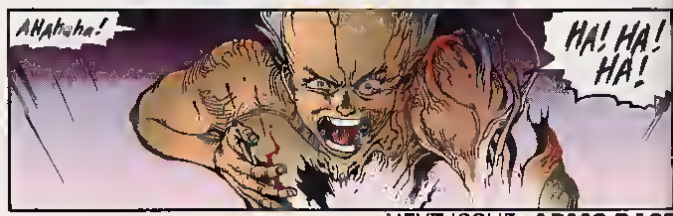

HE'S HOOKED UP TO SOME KIND OF MACHINE!


...MY... BODY...
...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO...?
THE POWER...
YOUR BODY IS NOT ENOUGH TO FEED THE POWER'S VORACIOUS APPETITE, SO IT SEEKS TO ABSORB OTHER THINGS!
YOU MEAN IT WANTS THIS SHIP?!
N... NONSENSE...
IT SEEKS TO ESCAPE THE LIMITATIONS YOU PRESENT!

THAT'S
BULLSHIT!
AUGH!
BLAM
DON'T BE A FOOL!
YOU MONSTER







NEXT ISSUE: **ARMS RACE**

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Emperor Akira mercifully sleeps, but the limitations of an increasingly barely human body wear on Tetsuo the power within eager to escape his flesh Ragged American troops begin what passes for an assault on the city of Neo-Tokyo as duplicitous scientists, pushed to the edge scheme agendas to undo the powerful forces in motion And below the rubble, a desperate Kaneda and Joker arm themselves for a war they have no hope of winning and no way of avoiding

The madness that passes for day to-day in the Great Tokyo Empire has begun to take its toll on all bringing each that much closer to the breaking point

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

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